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ABSTRACT

This publication presents a collection of materials on the German experience with literacy education. A timeline offers a brief account of adult literacy in the Federal Republic of Germany. "Literacy as a Problem in the Federal Republic of Germany" identifies the causes and impacts of "second-order illiteracy" (the loss of reading and writing skills acquired at school). It discusses causes of illiteracy, literacy education practice, projects, and perspectives on what needs to be done. The next section provides materials from the First UNESCO Workshop on Preventing Functional Illiteracy and Integrating Youth into the World of Work. A summary report discusses causes of illiteracy as identified by participants, including poverty, family background, and the media and illiteracy and employment. "Literacy in Industrialized Countries" summarizes conclusions and recommendations of the workshop, including definition of illiteracy/literacy, programs and measures, research, development and funding, structure and organization, implementation, and international cooperation. Experts' comments on literacy follow. The next section is a short history of literacy education since 1946. "The Federal Republic of Germany Preparing for International Literacy Year 1990" (Traugott Schoefthaler) introduces several ways of international cooperation in promoting reading and writing as cultural techniques. "Towards Basic Education for All" (Kurt Mueller) expands upon this German point of view. Appendixes include 26 references and a list of addresses of literacy agencies. (YLB)

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Bernhard Gläss

Literacy Education in Industrialized Countries

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International Literacy Year 1990

BERNHARD GLÄSS

LITERACY EDUCATION IN INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES

Reasons and Programs for Promoting Basic Cultural Techniques in the Federal Republic of Germany and Other Countries of the Europe Region

German Commission for UNESCO, Bonn

Cover: Bernhard Gläss using a postage stamp of the United States of America

Back: Zabelle Côté, UNESCO's Poster for International Literacy Year 1990

Editor: Dr. Traugott Schöfthaler

Adapted from the German edition "Alphabetisierung in Industriestaaten? Europäische Probleme beim Umgang mit den Kulturtechniken Lesen und Schreiben" (1988)

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Preface of the German Commission for UNESCO

In his address on World Literacy Day, September 8th 1988, the Director-General of UNESCO, Mr. Federico Mayor, asks if the international community wants to take its first steps into the third millenium in leaving behind 890 million people who are not able to read and write. The International Literacy Year 1990 proclaimed by the United Nations, places high expectations on our solidarity. Before we answer to Mr. Mayor's question, we should look at the problems on our own doorstep.

Illiterates in industrialized countries usually are people who have lost - either partly or completely - their reading and writing skills acquired at school. Bernhard Gläss who, as a researcher and journalist, has been dealing with national and international aspects of the subject for years, identifies the causes and impacts of "second-order illiteracy" and looks into the strategies to prevent it. The German Commission for UNESCO has asked Mr. Gläss to take stock of the knowledge and experience of ten years of adult literacy education in the Federal Republic of Germany, and to draw some lines to the experience of other industrialized countries. Mr. Gläss comes to the conclusion that although industrialized countries encounter problems in literacy education different from those of the developing countries, there is a common ground of action: the modern strategy of early prevention combined with everyday stimulation and encouragement of reading and writing for everybody.

At the 24th Session of UNESCO's General Conference in 1987, the contribution of the Federal Republic of Germany to the special debate on literacy provoked particular interest. It features literacy as a truly global issue, relevant for both industrialized and developing countries. This contribution which was presented by Dr. Traugott Schöfthaler, German Commission for

UNESCO, is published in this book. It introduces several ways of international co-operation in promoting reading and writing as cultural techniques. In a similar vein and with particular reference to UNESCO's third Medium Term Plan (1990-1995), Dr. Kurt Müller, now member of UNESCO's Executive Board, explained this German point of view at the 25th General Conference 1989. His speech is also included in this book.

Frequently, the German Commission for UNESCO has been quoted by the press as the source of an estimated number of 500,000 to three million adult illiterates in the Federal Republic of Germany. Ten years after the public discussion of these estimates by experts of our National Commission, we cannot yet present exact statistics. As interim findings, however, we present results of investigations on a problem not to be found in educational statistics. Those who insist on data have to be content with the number of participants in reading and writing classes in adult education centres; beyond statistics, we should ask ourselves how the still depressingly high number of unsuccessful young school leavers can make use of the opportunities in our communication society. In 1986, more than 55,000 German and over 14,000 foreign young people completed compulsory schooling without a secondary school leaving certificate.

With the first German edition of this book published in 1988 the German Commission for UNESCO started its activities in the field of public information on the objectives of International Literacy Year 1990. The updated and adapted English version aims at introducing our experiences to the world forum of exchange of ideas in education, science and culture which is UNESCO. Any comments and suggestions are welcome. The printing of this English edition was made possible through extrabudgetary support from the Federal Foreign Office, Dept. of Cultural Affairs.

Bonn, December 1989

Dr. Hans Meinel
Secretary-General

Brief Account on Adult Literacy in the Federal Republic of Germany

1978 Literacy courses are established in the Federal Republic of Germany

1980 "A Right to Read" conference takes place in Bremen, in which the mass media take up the issue of illiteracy.

1981 The Federal Ministry of Education and Science (BMBW)* sets up a "Team for Orientation and Education Aid" (AOB)*. The purpose is to develop a study on illiteracy in the Federal Republic of Germany. As a result, an increasing number of adult education centres offer literacy classes.

1982 About 2,600 adults participate in literacy classes offered by approximately 140 institutions. In October, the project "Literacy", funded by the BMBW*, is established at the Pedagogical Section (PAS)* of the German Adult Education Association (DVV)*.

1984 About 3,500 adults participate in literacy classes offered by approximately 250 institutions. In February, the project "Literacy in the Multi-Media System" is set up at the Adolf-Grimme-Institute (AGI)* of the Adult Education Association. The project "Literacy" publishes a number of materials for adult literacy training.

The Ministers for Education of the countries within the European Communities adopt joint "Measures in the fight against illiteracy." In September, a conference on "Literacy in the Federal Republic of Germany" is held on the occasion of the International Literacy Day at the Adolf-Grimme-Institute in Marl.

1985 Approximately 5,700 participants attend adult literacy classes in about 280 institutions. The Pedagogical Section's project "Literacy" publishes teaching and learning aids and recommendations for tutors of adult literacy classes as well as textbooks for participants. In September, the University of Oldenburg organizes an international conference on "Literacy as Basic Education for Adults" for the Commission of the European Communities.

1986 In autumn, radio and television stations start broadcasting information spots on functional illiteracy. The demand for adult literacy classes rises as a result of the broadcasting of information and indicating telephone numbers for further information. In December, the first international UNESCO workshop on the "Prevention of Functional Illiteracy and Integration of Youth into the World of Work" takes place in Hamburg at the UNESCO Institute for Education (UIE)*. Experts from 25 industrialized countries in Eastern and Western Europe as well as from North America and Israel (UNESCO's Europe Region) take part in the workshop.

The literacy project of the Pedagogical Section is extended until 1988, primarily focusing on a new aspect, namely "Literacy and Basic Education."

1987 On the first of April, the Adolf-Grimme Institute enters the second phase of the project "Literacy in the Multi-Media System." In Angers, France, a European seminar on "In-Service Training for Tutors in Literacy Education", takes place in May.

In about 310 adult education centres more than 1,000 classes with about 8,500 participants are held weekly.

On the proposal of UNESCO, the United Nations proclaim International Literacy Year 1990.

1988 In May, the Adolf-Grimme-Institute in Marl introduces to an international symposium the topic of "Ten Years of Adult Literacy Education in the Federal Republic of Germany." On International Literacy Day, 8th of September, an exhibition of the "Writing Workshop for Adult Literacy" (registered society) Bremen, Federal Republic of Germany, is opened at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris.

In November 1988, the Federal Minister of Education and Science holds a European symposium on "Adult Literacy" in Bonn.

1989 In April, at the invitation of the Federal Foreign Office, Bonn, a group of governmental and non-governmental experts identifies possible contributions of the Federal Republic of Germany to International Literacy Year.

The German Commission for UNESCO, in collaboration with the UNESCO Institute for Education, Hamburg, is entrusted the national coordination for International Literacy Year.

A new project on "functional post-literacy" is started at the Pedagogical Institute (PAS) of the DVV*, financed by the Federal Ministry of Education and Science.

In September, a group of 25 representatives of non-governmental organizations and grassroot projects active in the field of functional literacy starts cooperation and planning of contributions to International Literacy Year. The German Commission for UNESCO publishes a German version of the UNESCO/ Standing NGO Committee Guide to International Literacy Year and disseminates German versions of the ILY poster and the first three issues of its ILY Bulletin "Alphabetisierung".

Literacy as a Problem in the Federal Republic of Germany

Less than a hundred years ago, the Prussian Protestant Church Counsellor Münchmeyer warned of the dangers of reading: *"People who are not interested in reading should not be encouraged to do so. It is not desirable that a peasant should read the news. The need for good literature should not be evoked, at least not among the rural population. And even books for one's edification should be handed out sparingly. The bible, a hymnbook, a catechism, a collection of instructional reading for the family and a prayer book are sufficient and with it, at the most, a missionary newsletter." (Quoted after E. Sack, Die preußische Volksschule im Dienst gegen die Freiheit. Berlin, 1961, p. 57)*

The conservative Prussians considered education, especially civic education, a threat which seemed greater than the economical advantages to be expected from literacy instructions for the whole population. With this background, the way to compulsory schooling in the nineteenth century was rather contradictory: at one hand, education for workers in the growing industry was necessary, on the other hand there was a fear of the emancipatory power of literacy. However, the late nineteenth century is the phase in which literacy made the greatest progress in Germany. By the end of the 19th century, there were hardly any illiterates - according to the statistics. In 1899, the illiterate ratio for the whole area of Germany was estimated at less than one per cent. These numbers were based on army and marriage statistics. A literate person was somebody who could write his or her name. For the last time in 1912, the category 'literate' was statistically registered (cf. P. Eisenberg, Arbeiterbildung und Alphabetisierung im 19. Jahrhundert. In: H.W. Giese and B. Gläss (eds.): Analphabetismus in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Osnabrück, 1983, pp. 13 ff). Result: 0.01% to 0.02% illiterates. This corresponds to 4,000 to 8,000 adults, who stated about themselves that they were illiterate or

who could not write their name. Since then, illiteracy was regarded as abolished and mainly expected from people who grew up under rather extreme conditions (war-children, gypsies and sailors, etc). Compulsory school attendance thus was seen as guaranteeing an at least basic knowledge of reading and writing. Since then, the skills of reading and writing are part of the image of people in the developed countries of the world - a citizen is literate. There may be different levels of literacy and orthographic skills as well as differences between basic and further education; the lack of orthography or basic education, however, was not considered a major problem until the mid-seventies of this century. There were too many work places that did not require writing skills at all. There were even plenty of work places where knowledge of German was not needed; hundreds of thousands of migrants from Mediterranean countries were employed in the Federal Republic. Only the upcoming crisis on the job market in the mid-seventies gave new importance to the ability to read and write: mastery of reading and writing became, as a cultural technique, prerequisite of getting a job, no matter if the job actually required writing skills. Today's automatized work requires more and more co-ordinating and controlling skills which include a relatively high level of reading and writing skills.

"We have a lot of paper work here since we have electronic data processing,(...). One paper follows the other. We already thought of how we could simplify it, but then again we really need all that paper work until everybody is informed" (Statement of a foreman in a Swiss production company quoted after A. Bühofer, Das alltägliche Schreiben im Berufsleben. In: S. Grosse (ed.), Schriftlichkeit. 1983, p. 162).

Mastery of writing or at least basic literary skills is increasingly becoming prerequisite of inservice training as well as of preparing for a new job. The knowledge of the written language as a precondition for further education is required in keeping the job as well as in applying for a new one. Adults without sufficient

reading or writing skills nowadays have the opportunity to regain their skills lost since they have completed school. In 1988, more than 10,000 adults used this opportunity, mostly in adult education centres.

Evelyn S., nine years of compulsory schooling, unskilled worker at a printing house, is suggested to take over tasks which go beyond mere packing. The young woman refuses the promotion because she would thereby loose her confidante at her work place. Furthermore, she would not be able to cope with the demands on her writing skills on her new job. Evelyn S. decides to attend a basic course for reading and writing at an adult education centre.

Evelyn S. may serve as an example for many other adults who take part in basic education programmes for reading and writing in the Federal Republic of Germany and in other highly industrialized countries. Already in the seventies, programmes for a second start for learning were offered to tens of thousands of adults in Great Britain and the United States. At that time, the problem of illiteracy seemed to be unknown in Germany. This did not change until the end of the seventies, when an estimate of one million funtionally illiterates was discussed, seemingly without any obvious reason. In 1980 only the problem could no longer be ignored. At this time, a conference was held on "Illiteracy among German-speaking Youth and Adults - A Challenge for Further Education and Research" (cf. F. Drecoll/U. Müller, Für ein Recht auf Lesen. Analphabetismus in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Frankfurt, 1981). The German Adult Education Association and the University of Bremen together with the German Commission for UNESCO had invited experts on education from the Federal Republic and other European countries. This conference and the coverage it got in the mass media caused the problem of illiteracy to be discussed publicly. The theory put forward in the final communiqué proved to be true later:

"Wherever literacy instruction exists, the unexpected high and still increasing number of people responding, people of all kinds of social backgrounds and occupational groups, leads us to assume an even higher number of unknown cases of illiteracy. Thus, we know for sure we are facing a serious education problem now (...).

So if a right to read is demanded now, it is not made by those members of the educated class who display cultural pessimism. For those concerned it is a very concrete problem: the right to read also implies a right for a general education." (Drecoll/Müller, 1981, p.198)

For the first time estimates on the numbers of (functionally) illiterates in the Federal Republic of Germany were made: They ranged from 300,000 to three million.

Prof. Gottfried Hausmann of the UNESCO Institute for Education attributed these figures to the problem of an unclear definition. According to the UNESCO definition a person is not illiterate who can write a simple everyday statement such as "I am doing fine, I am unemployed but at least I am healthy. Yours John." Skills beneath this level lead to the assumption that the person in question has great difficulties with the written language. Exact definitions and delimitations of the term even now are still not known. Aproximately 10,000 participants in literacy classes are roughly divided into:

(1) people who can write their names and distinguish single letters but in general are unable to read or write;

(2) people who can - though with great difficulty - read a written passage on a low to medium level but are unable to write;

(3) people who can read but barely write and thus - being aware of their lack of skill - avoid writing altogether.

In agreement with a UNESCO definition, a person can be called (functionally) literate if he or she has enough reading and writing skills to take part in the social activities of his/her cultural

environment. This means that reading, writing and the comprehension of a short text referring to one's own cultural background is the minimum requirement.

Without even knowing much about the quantitative and qualitative dimensions of illiteracy within the Federal Republic of Germany, the Federal Ministry of Education and Science (BMBW) entrusted the AOB* project in Berlin (West) with a survey on "Illiteracy in the Federal Republic of Germany -First Considerations and Experiences with German Adult Literacy" (BMBW-Werkstattberichte, No. 32. Bonn 1981). The study formed the basis of the project "Development and Support of Literacy Programmes in the Vernacular Language." As from 1982, the project is then in the responsibility of the Pedagogical Institute of the German Adult Education Association. The task is to co-ordinate and to develop literacy practice on the federal level. Results of the project are presented in a series of publications on methods of literacy instruction; teaching material; tutor training; institutional conditions; learners' motivation; problems of classification; post literacy instruction.

Parallel to the literacy project of the Pedagogical Institute the BMBW* instructed the Adolf-Grimme-Institute to inform the public of both the necessity to read and write and of additional learning as an adult.

The project "Literacy and the Media" has three major targets:

(1) The use of media as teaching support;

(2) Information about illiteracy, mostly directed towards institutions;

(3) Promotion of reading and writing in the press, on television and via radio broadcasting.

The Adolf-Grimme Institute was involved in the production of ten five minute-long TV-spots broadcasted by some of the regional TV stations since 1986. The spots are supposed to

- inform the public on the extent and consequences of illiteracy;
- motivate people to deal actively with their problem of illiteracy;
- help overcoming fears and inhibitions so that new perspectives and competences can be developed.

The following text of one of the TV spots illustrates the intentions:

Marianne Koch, famous actress: *In the Federal Republic of Germany, there are about three million adults - foreigners not included - who cannot or only insufficiently read or write. In a country with a well developed educational and school system this number is alarmingly high. Ms Regina Müller tells you now how and where it is possible for adults to learn how to read and write.*

Regina Müller: Yes, I could read and I could write. But I had great inhibitions to show it because I thought I make more mistakes than other people. And that the others are better than me. It started - I think - when I had my retraining. They laughed at me when I could not catch up. And so I stopped trying. And even now I have the same problem. If I feel I cannot talk to them, it does not work. The adult education centre I go to helped me a great deal to reduce these inhibitions. Well, I got the address from my son's teacher. I trusted her and told her about my problem. And I said that I cannot help my son like other mothers do because of my writing difficulties. She gave me a telephone number. And I called the number and they put me through to the reading and writing course in Mehringhof. And I realized how many people cannot read and write properly. But it is so difficult to take the first step. Well, I work eight hours in a kindergarten. I start at six a.m. and finish at 2.30 p.m.. And then I prepare lunch, something fast, so that I have some time to learn a bit and I am back home at ten at night. I have this idea to get my general secondary school leaving certificate and I

would like to get it. Because after I would have made it, I would have gotten the final examination. Whether I can use it afterwards I do not know yet. That is another story. Sometimes it is hard to summon up all this energy. And every now and then, honestly, I would rather give up. But again I tell myself, come on, come on, because then one day you can say you got your O-levels.

Marianne Koch: *Fortunately, already many people had the courage to attend reading and writing classes in adult education centres and other institutions. If you have difficulties in reading and writing or if you know someone who has, please call the following telephone number, which is being shown right now. There you can get information about where classes are given close to your home and how you can enroll. Well, give it a go and call. (Insertion of the telephone number.)*

Broadcasting of those spots is limited to the regional channels, the so-called educational programmes, watched by only a minority of the population. (Less than 1% of all viewers prefer the regional programmes; cf. W. Horn and H. Paukens, Weiterbildung und Medien, No. 3. 1984, pp. X f.) Despite this relatively "bad" position there was a significantly increasing demand for more classes in the area of e.g. the North German and the Hesse Broadcasting Corporations. The number of participants increased from 5,700 in 1985 to 8,500 in mid1987 -- mainly as a result of the five-minute TV spots advertising for a proper education.

Causes

Almost all authors who deal with the causes of illiteracy in West Germany come to the conclusion that shortcomings in school education cannot be considered as the only reason for adult illiteracy. (cf. H.W. Giese, Causes and Consequences of Illiteracy among young People in the Federal Republic of Germany. A Study for UNESCO. Oldenburg, 1986.)

A pupil does not become illiterate because he or she was raised in an institution, his or her father is an alcoholic, or because the teacher did not like this child in particular, etc. Several surveys of biographies of adults with great difficulties in reading and/or writing revealed that in every case a combination of several factors led to the fact that reading and writing were not learned properly (cf. Marion Döbert-Nauert, Verursachungsfaktoren des Analphabetismus. Frankfurt, 1985). In almost all cases family background and individual factors combined with school factors. In some cases the learning process at school was broken off or the acquired knowledge was insufficiently secured so that it was forgotten easily. In the future, more attention will be paid to the process of unlearning. In many cases, unlearning starts as soon as young people leave school. Even though they are equipped with a basic knowledge in reading and writing, they are without a constant post-schooling motivation which is needed for further education. Apparently, young people who do not succeed in getting a job are particularly threatened.

Practice

In contrast to the very rough estimates of the total number of the (functionally) illiterates in the Federal Republic of Germany (between 300 thousand and three millions), there are comparatively precise figures on offer and demand. In 1988, more than 350 adult education institutions offered classes like "Reading and writing from the very beginning". Approximately 10,000 participants attended such classes weekly. The northern states and big cities have the highest number of institutions offering adult education courses. Opportunities for a second start are often missing in rural areas.

The projects at the Pedagogical Institute (PAS) and at the Adolf-Grimme Institute, funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Science, helped a lot to improve the structure of literacy instruction since 1982. Regional and national education programmes were established. The staff situation, however, varies. The vast majority of the tutors are employed on a part-time basis and their salary depends on the number of classes taught. Consequently, there is a high fluctuation of tutors since many - looking for a job with social security - tend to move into other fields of employment. Much of the accumulated know-how gets lost as new colleagues have to be introduced to the work.

A certain improvement of the situation for the tutors came with the federal job creation measures (ABM): Over a period of one or two years, tutors were employed as full-time teachers for further education classes. This was a step forward: Fulltime programmes for unemployed illiterates, well coordinated programmes in basic education, and qualification offers for basic and/or further knowledge in reading, writing and numeracy, preparations for examinations etc. could only be realized by fulltime tutors.

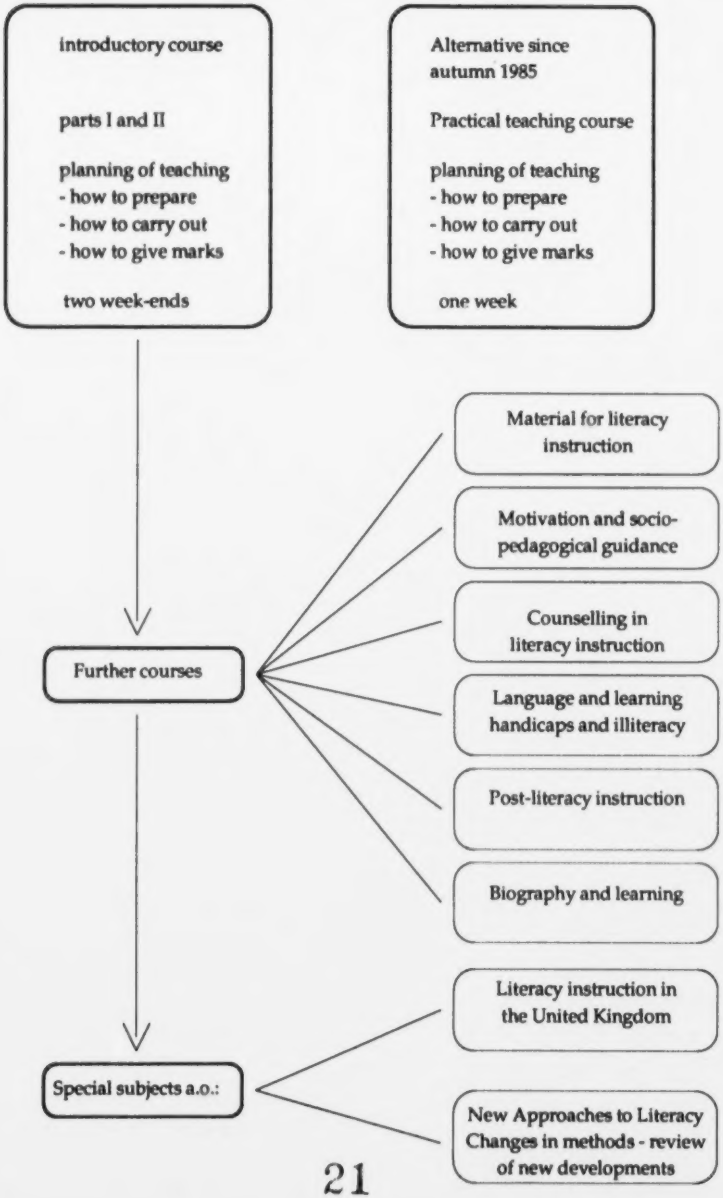
Tutors for adult literacy education usually are not prepared for this specific task. Special training programmes are offered to them while on the job by some adult education centres and their Federal State Association. This system has proved itself worthwhile as the range of activities in adult literacy education requires an equally wide range of qualification. More than 80% of the instructors are teachers of different subjects, some are sociologists or psychologists. None of them, however, had regular employment before in this field, such as teaching at a state school.

The tutors engaged in the project "Literacy" at the Pedagogical Institute presented a concept for the advancement of their own training. In its essentials it is nowadays in use in the tutors' further training. The concept focuses on knowledge of the adults' learning process, of teaching methods for reading and writing, knowledge of linguistics, psychology and sociology, and on qualifications as counsellors. Still, for some of the points in focus, the evidence provided is insufficient. Only recently scientific research has discovered functional illiteracy as a problem. Closer co-operation between researchers and people working in adult literacy programmes could improve the tutors' further training to a great extent. There is still too little knowledge of the learning process and learning difficulties of adults as well as of appropriate pedagogical methods.

The in-service training programme of the Association of Adult Education Centres in Lower Saxony, Hannover, is presented in *Figure 1*.

The task to build up this knowledge gives rise to the question whether adult illiterates did not learn enough in school, whether teaching methods were appropriate, or if skills and knowledge can get lost after leaving school. Discussions and conferences lead to the impression that attention has to be focused on the process of unlearning and the second-order illiteracy following it.

Figure 1: Design of in-service training programmes of the Association of Adult Education Centres in Lower Saxony, Hannover.


introductory course
parts I and II
planning of teaching
- how to prepare
- how to carry out
- how to give marks
two week-ends
Alternative since autumn 1985
Practical teaching course
planning of teaching
- how to prepare
- how to carry out
- how to give marks
one week
Further courses
Material for literacy instruction
Motivation and socio-pedagogical guidance
Counselling in literacy instruction
Language and learning handicaps and illiteracy
Post-literacy instruction
Biography and learning
Special subjects a.o.:
Literacy instruction in the United Kingdom
New Approaches to Literacy Changes in methods - review of new developments

The term "second-order illiteracy" indicates that someone has become illiterate only after having left school, meaning that at the time he or she left school there was at least some knowledge of how to read and write. But these skills had not been sufficiently rooted for them to be able to keep up the level of knowledge they once had -unless they are provided with further education. An additional problem is that "bad" orthography often leads to avoid writing altogether. The unlearning process can thus start right after leaving school.

Projects

In 1988, about 350 adult education institutions in the Federal Republic of Germany offer literacy programmes. Three nationwide projects deserve special attention.

Pedagogical Institute (PAS) of the German Adult Education Association (DVV)
Project Literacy and Basic Education
Holzhausenstr. 21
D-6000 Frankfurt/Main 1

Since 1982, the Federal Ministry of Education and Science has been funding the project "Literacy and Basic Education" at the Pedagogical Institute (PAS) of the German Adult Education Association. The academic staff has worked out a concept of literacy instruction. The project focuses on tutors' further training. Since 1986, the project has been developing the idea of literacy/basic education serving as the basis for the lifelong learning process. The Pedagogical Section published numerous recommendations for tutors, teaching material and periodicals. The material is mostly free of charge. In 1989, the project has entered a new phase: "functional post-literacy", focussing on the transfer of knowledge and skills acquired in adult literacy training to the world of work.

Adolf-Grimme Institute (AGI) of the DVV
Project Literacy in the Multi-Media System
Eduard-Weitsch-Weg 25
D-4370 Marl

From 1984 to 1988, the Ministry of Education and Science has been funding the project "Literacy in the Multi-Media System" at the AGI*. Multi-media system here means making use of radio, television, video and print media within adult education. This usage ranges from promoting and addressing of partici-

pants to the development of teaching materials.

Schreibwerkstatt für neue Leser und Schreiber e.V.
Lahnstr.4
2800 Bremen 1

The registered society "Writing Workshop for New Readers and Writers" is not funded by the government. It is an association of class tutors on national level. The term "Writing Workshop" stands for special attention given to supportive efforts for reading and writing and for co-ordinating the tutors' self-help. The Workshop hands out reading material to class participants and regularly publishes the information brochure "Alpha-Circular" ("Alpha-Rundbrief").

The following four projects of particular importance serve as example for a number of others:

Adult Education Center (Volkshochschule), Dept. Basic Education
Schwachhauser Heerstr. 67
D-2800 Bremen 1

The Bremen adult education centre had a pioneer function for adult literacy education from the very beginnings. In 1980, the first conference on illiteracy in industrialized countries took place there. Bremen is also pioneering in tutors' further training and in the development of teaching methods (Language Experience Approach).

Team for Orientation and Educational Assistance (AOB)
Gneisenaustr. 2
D-1000 Berlin 61

The Team for Orientation and Educational Assistance is a non-governmental organization which offers general education assistance and courses. Since the late seventies, the work has been done in close co-operation with the welfare office and other

state and municipal institutions. The project developed various teaching and advisory materials based on a psychological approach.

Foundation for Technical and Vocational Training and Education for the Unemployed
(Stiftung berufliche Bildung)
Dept. Basic Education
Wendenstr. 493
D-2000 Hamburg 26

The foundation offers literacy courses to unemployed German-speaking youth and young adults between 17 and 25 years on a full-time basis in Hamburg. The participants receive financial support by the Federal Employment Office.

Department for Vocational and Further Education at the Lower Saxony Adult Education Centre
(Aus- und Weiterbildungszentrum der
Niedersächsischen Volkshochschule)
Max-Planck-Str. 5
D-2810 Verden

Starting in October 1987, the Adult Education Centre of Lower Saxony offers one-year programmes for long-term unemployed functional illiterates. The programme focuses on initial training for workers in timber, metal and building and construction industries. The participants have no school leaving certificates and no vocational training/occupational qualification. The courses' purpose is to facilitate their access to the job market.

Perspectives

A major aim in the "fight against illiteracy" is to prevent the relapse into illiteracy. On the fourth of June 1984, the Education Ministers of the European Communities declared in a press-release under the head-line "Programmes for the fight against illiteracy": "... that programmes in elementary and grammar schools should be planned to improve thouroughly the competence in the spoken and written language."

If these improvement programmes do not succeed which they cannot be expected to do on a short-term basis, it can be assumed that literacy/basic education will become a long-term task for adult education centres. The creation of full-time jobs for teachers in elementary and further education at adult education centres indicates that those responsible for adult education have started to consider functional literacy as a permanent task.

After ten years of adult literacy education in Germany, after a phase of bustle and consolidation new developments now become apparent. Full-time programmes that are carried out by the foundation "Technical and Vocational Training" in Hamburg or by the adult education centre in Bremen show that a mere orientation towards reading and writing is not sufficient. Changing conditions in the world of work (mechanization, automation), unemployment and the increasing influence of new communication technologies have revealed that reading and writing have a relevant impact on a job, on vocational training and on private everyday life (cf. W. Kreft, Elementarbildung. In: Federlesen. Beiträge zur Alphabetisierung und Elementarbildung, no. 1. Frankfurt/Main, 1986 and H.W. Giese, Warum wird der Analphabetismus gerade heute zu einem Problem?. In: H. Balhorn and H. Brügelmann (eds), Welten der Schrift in der Erfahrung der Kinder. Konstanz, 1987).

Literacy and basic education can provide the prerequisite for qualified further education and retraining opportunities for everybody. Moreover, it can be assumed that increased consideration given to aspects of general and basic occupational needs helps improving the learners' motivation and stabilizing knowledge and skills that have been acquired. Basic education, however, should not be understood as fitting exclusively to occupational needs; this is indicated in *Figure 2* on the example of Bremen (taken from Alpha-Info 3, 1987, pp.15 ff by the Pedagogical Institute). The close connection of literacy instruction with basic education and even the preparation of school-leaving examinations is shown in the following table of courses offered at the adult education centre in Bremen.

Literacy education for adults contains elements of other subjects, depending on which (occupational) background the participant has, e.g. home-economics, garment-making, driving licence etc. The tutors in Bremen offer additional basic education classes, for example in the subjects just mentioned. This gives the participants an idea of "lifelong learning" and helps to reduce the isolation of literacy classes in the structure of the adult education centre. Thus, basic education can assume the task of introducing participants to forms of formally organized learning.

The Federal Ministry of Education and Science has promoted this expansion of adult literacy education on the basis of a new concept developed by the Pedagogical Institute (PAS)*. New concepts of basic education leading to further education are developed and tested. Literacy education is both a prerequisite and a starting point of a type of further education which connects both personal and vocational aspects (cf. Informationen. Alphabetisierung und elementare Qualifikationen, No. 3. Frankfurt, 1987).

This task is, however, difficult to realize as long as the general conditions of training and further education are not improved

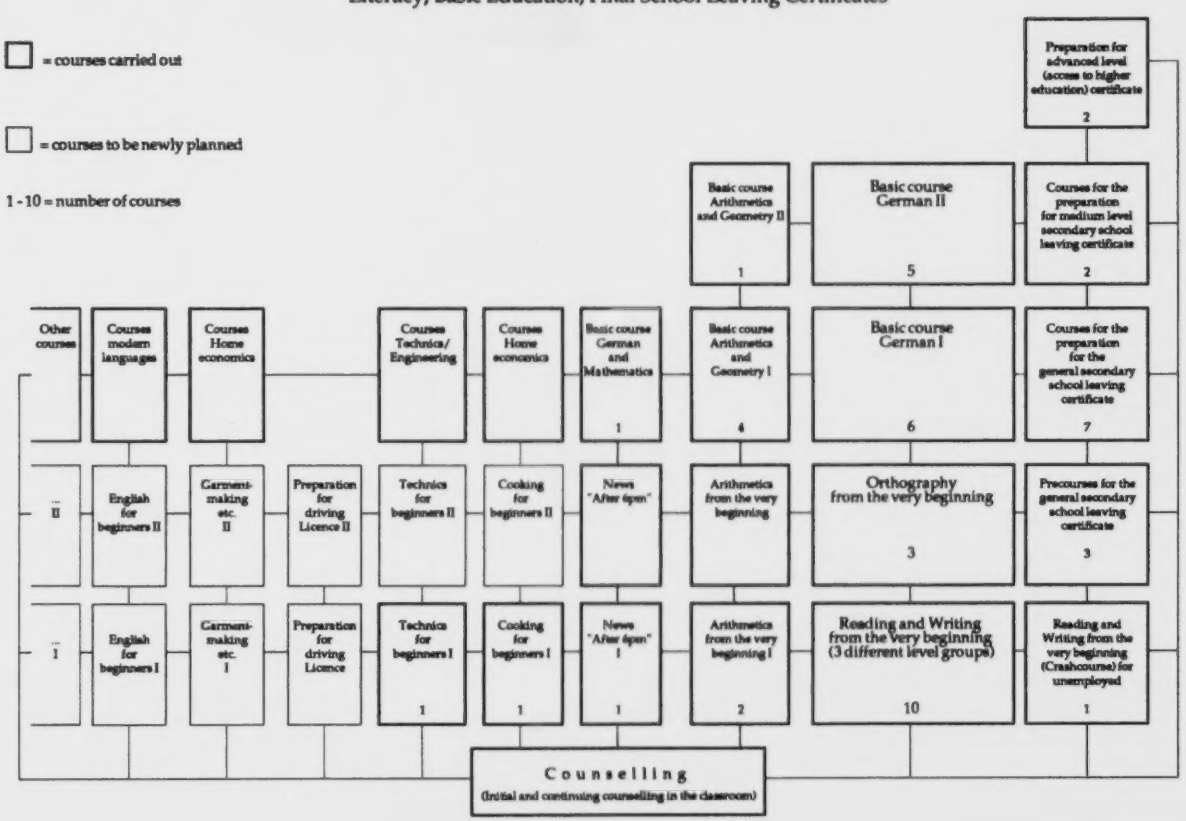


Figure 2: The course system of the adult education centre in Bremen

on the federal and state level. Those who are serious about the principle of lifelong learning will have to create opportunities for everybody who is interested in further education. A long break in between adult literacy and further education could spoil the re-discovered habit of learning.

"Only when further education can be integrated in the structure of the public educational system, the process of unlearning might be stopped." This declaration was among the recommendations made by the 17th German Vocational School Conference held 1987 in Osnabrück.

New and more comprehensive concepts have to be realized and then accepted by course participants. Instruction of any kind requires qualified tutors. In the present state of adult literacy education, the tutors' further training is in a phase of consolidation. Not all teaching potential available has been reached by the programmes. Literacy education, for most tutors, is a part-time job they do combined with other part-time jobs; they are paid on a remuneration basis. The fluctuation in the teaching jobs is therefore high whereas the need for further training is re-emerging with every new staff recruited. Many adult education centres have not adequately responded yet to these demands. With literacy education becoming increasingly complex through the basic education already provided, new forms of professionally organizing further education itself and further education tutors have to be found. The development of literacy education is characterized by continuing demand for it, as it is made evident through the media campaign "Reading and writing for all". Only where the need for adult literacy education is clearly expressed, the offers are as a matter of fact expanded - though sometimes with a certain time lag. It was the cooperation of educational authorities, tutors, representatives of the media and course participants which gave a good start to literacy programmes for adults in the Federal Republic of Germany -like in other industrialized countries. A constant development, however, can only be secured by continuously promoting and

advertising educational opportunities. In the future, new ways and means will have to be found. To this end, literacy and education experts consider international co-operation to be particularly helpful.

First steps have already been taken. International conferences on basic education at the University of Oldenburg in 1985, at the UNESCO Institute for Education in Hamburg in 1986, at the University of Angers in 1987, a conference of the Commission of the European Communities in September 1987 in Athens, a conference at the Adolf-Grimme-Institute in May 1988 in Marl and a second UNESCO Europe Region workshop on functional illiteracy in July 1989 in Ottenstein (Austria) have facilitated coordination of the work and the exchange of teaching materials and of specific experiences in the training of tutors. In September 1988, the Fourth Conference of Education Ministers of UNESCO's Europe Region (MINEDEUROPE IV) adopted a recommendation on International Literacy Year, placing particular emphasis on mobilization of expertise in industrial countries and on solidarity with the developing countries. Another recommendation in the same direction was adopted by the 10th Regional Conference of National Commissions for UNESCO in April 1989 in Berlin (German Democratic Republic). The Assembly of the United Nations has entrusted UNESCO with the programme for International Literacy Year 1990. The International Literacy Year is meant to draw attention to the problems of illiteracy, including second-order illiteracy. In the Federal Republic of Germany, the International Literacy Year activities are co-ordinated through the German Commission for UNESCO, with a view at involving as many governmental and non-governmental organizations and experts as appropriate for bringing about significant German contributions to the Year.
Up to now the most comprehensive conference on "Literacy in Industrialized Countries" took place from 1 to 5 December 1986 at the UNESCO Institute for Education in Hamburg. Fifty experts on literacy and education from twenty-five countries of the UNESCO Europe Region (Western and Eastern Europe,

North America and Israel) discussed programmes and measures for the prevention and massive reduction of second-order illiteracy.

First UNESCO Workshop on Preventing Functional Illiteracy and Integrating Youth into the World of Work

A European specialists' workshop at the UNESCO Institute for Education, Hamburg, 1st to 5th December, 1986.

Summary report

The conference title makes it clear that literacy instruction nowadays seeks the connection with vocational training and education. In the European countries (East and West), the United States, Canada and Israel, there are no remarkable differences in the experiences with functional illiteracy; the causes identified for illiteracy and literacy programmes are similar. There are differences, however, in what the countries focus on. While e.g. the representatives from the USSR and Hungary stress an increasing threat to reading through television and through deficient experiences at home, the representatives from Austria and Finland mainly stressed aspects such as lack of opportunities for further education after leaving school. All participants agreed that occupational and personal integration should be supported through adult literacy education. Such a statement holds for industrialized and developing countries, notwithstanding their far-reaching differences.

Whereas the literacy ratio increases in almost all developing countries, the industrialized countries have to deal with the problem of relapse into functional illiteracy. In this context, Professor Ravindra H. Dave, Director of the UNESCO Institute for Education in Hamburg, states a world-wide tendency of convergence. In countries which have already been transformed from a developing to an industrialized country, like Jamaica for example, developments similar to those in industrialized countries take place: After a phase of complete literacy, a "relapse" into illiteracy can be observed to the same extent as in France or Hun-

gary. The causes for this development have not yet been sufficiently researched into.

Illiteracy and Poverty

Some of the participants of the conference, such as the representatives from Switzerland and the "Groupe International du Mouvement ATD* Quart Monde en France", pointed out that in some countries studies have shown that there is a correlation between illiteracy and poverty. It would be inaccurate to say, however, that where there is functional illiteracy there is necessarily poverty. It cannot in fact be said that illiteracy and poverty always go together.

This holds true for both industrialized as well as for developing countries. In *Tanzania*, for example, considerable progress has been made in the struggle against illiteracy even though Tanzania is considered to be one of the poorest countries. However, there is no doubt that socially and economically disadvantaged population groups have only limited access to educational opportunities.

School Failure and the Family

Research findings of the literacy institutions for Francophone Belgium, "Lire et Ecrire" (Brussels), on causes of illiteracy showed that children from families in which reading and writing are not at all or hardly ever practised are particularly threatened by illiteracy. Some of the reasons cited were the following: Parents not able to assume any model function for their children. Children do not have enough support at home for their school work. An example: Hungary published a book addressed to both parents and children. This book is given to

young parents. It contains easily understandable information on children's development and on the importance of language acquisition. Two thirds of the book are texts to be read out and games which aim at writing and numeracy. The book was published in a big edition at low cost. It is also used in kindergartens and schools.

Many participants of the conference stressed that while what is taught at school is appropriate for the "average" child, socially disadvantaged children often have difficulties in meeting the demands made on them at school.

It was particularly emphasized that
- in school, reading is too often taught without developing in children an inclination to read and the habit of reading;
- there are several alternative methods for learning to read and write; none of them is suitable for all children;
- inflexible curricula which are the same for all do not make allowance for individual characteristics; e.g. insufficient attention is paid to the multicultural mix of children in the same class.

Media

It has often been assumed that watching too much television could be one of the causes for illiteracy. Television, as it was occasionally remarked, stifles children's curiosity and renders them passive. The representative from the USSR called television the opium which prevents people from reading books and newspapers. On the other hand, television is understood to be a new way to acquire information and knowledge, particularly by educational programmes or by TV spots advertising for education like those broadcasted in the Federal Republic of Germany and Canada. Many participants spoke in favour of a better media education, for an antagonistic attitude like "print media

versus audiovisual media" would be unrealistic. New methods of "media education" are recently developed and publicly discussed in many countries (cf. W. Horn and H. Paukens, Analphabetismus und das Fernsehen. In: Bertelsmann-Briefe, No. 122, pp. 22-29).

A TV spot advertising education for Canadian pupils on the Canadian television.

A famous ice-hockey player, a very big and strong man, talks to pupils about reading. He says he reads a lot. An eight-year-old black pupil, a small and frail boy, stands up and says "I do not believe that you read". The ice-hockey player lifts the boy at eye-level and tells him "When I was your age I was small and thin. I went to the library and borrowed books on bodybuilding and then I read them."

Illiteracy and Employment

Many industrialized countries consider the struggle against illiteracy also as a struggle against unemployment. It was pointed out, however, that being literate does not automatically guarantee employment. As an example it was said that only ten per cent of 30,000 unemployed in a certain region could actually get a job if 30,000 jobs, requiring knowledge of the new communication technology, were created. In fact, this special aspect puts forward two points:

(1) literacy instruction/basic education alone cannot remedy (individual) unemployment;

(2) literacy instruction/basic education opens access to further education - and also to new technologies.

Therefore some countries pointed out that additional computer-based instruction should be offered to increase the opportunities for finding a job. In this way, participants of literacy classes would also learn that new communication technologies are not restricted to banks, supermarkets etc. but that they themselves can handle them (cf. H.W. Giese, Causes and Consequences of Illiteracy among Young People in the Federal Republic of Germany. A Study for UNESCO. Oldenburg, 1986, pp. 31 ff).

The discussion on illiteracy and employment also lead to the conclusion that employment should not be the only and isolated objective of literacy training. Other aspects of literacy seen in the context of lifelong education are not to be neglected:

- the *individual aspect*: restoring self-esteem, personal development, self-reliance;
- the *social aspect*: the possibility of exercising citizen's rights, of fitting in better with the social environment, of participating in family or neighbourhood life, of keeping informed of one's children's school career etc.
- the *cultural aspect*: to have a deeper understanding of one's own culture, to have access to books, paintings, music, and the theatre, to understand the history of one's home town or neighbourhood - fields of activity from which the illiterate often feels completely excluded, feeling "that's not for me."

"That's not for me" was repeatedly observed to be a general comment of girls and young women facing new challenges in their educational and vocational lives.

The participants stressed in particular that the group of unemployed youth and especially girls are in need to be supported. There are no reliable studies on the connection of functional illiteracy and youth unemployment, neither from nations with a free market economy nor from nations with a staterun or planned economy.

Literacy in Industrialized Countries. Summary of the conclusions and recommendations of the UNESCO Workshop

(Adapted from: Heiko Balhorn and Hans Brügelmann (eds): Welten der Schrift in der Erfahrung der Kinder. Konstanz, 1987, pp. 275-279. Author: Bernhard Gläss)

The 23rd General Conference of the UNESCO 1985 in Sofia declared the eradication of illiteracy in all countries by the year 2000 as a priority area of activity. It has been known for at least ten years that there is a considerable number of functionally illiterates in developed countries. Some measures have been taken already. In this context, adult education has priority but they also attempt at preventing a relapse into illiteracy within formal schooling. Unfortunately until now just a small number of functionally illiterates could be covered by the measure, in the Federal Republic of Germany like in most of the developed countries.

In accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Conference of UNESCO, the UNESCO Institute for Education in Hamburg organized an expert meeting in December 1986. For the first time, experts from Europe, Canada and Israel came together to discuss special programmes against illiteracy in developed countries. Experts, tutors of further education, members of governments and representatives of non-governmental organizations from 25 countries dealt mainly with the following four questions:

(1) How can the formal school system improve teaching methods and didactics so that pupils performing weakly in reading and writing are not excluded from the learning process?

(2) How can a permanent lifelong motivation, especially for reading, be achieved?

(3) How should educational measures for youth and young adults after completing school be designed in order to correspond to occupational as well as to everyday demands?

(4) Which experiences have been made with literacy programmes in adult education institutions? How can they be improved, e.g. by concepts adjusted to the needs of the adults and accordingly qualified tutors.

In the following part, the conclusions and recommendations of the workshop will be summarized. They are addressed to governments (in East and West) and to national and international education centres. UNESCO was requested to compare, to coordinate and to encourage activities in the following fields of work:

1. Definition of illiteracy/literacy

There are no general criteria for (in-) sufficient reading and writing skills in developed countries. Seemingly "objective" criteria use phrases like: "illiteracy is..., if..., you take..., and then..." Moreover, it is feared that a rigid definition reduces literacy education to a basic knowledge of reading and writing. The misleading and negatively connotated terms illiteracy/literacy should be substituted - wherever it is possible - by "loss of reading and writing skills", "basic education" or "communication training".

2. Programmes and measures

It should be agreed upon that education is not exclusively orientated towards school or the world of work. Learning is a lifelong process which helps to develop an all-round personality. Schools and literacy classes can only offer a first access to learning. In terms of policy the ability to read and write should be

considered one of the basic human and civil rights. Reading should be a natural part of everyday life and learning, thus books should be available wherever people are. This applies in particular to the family. Parents should be supported in their role to be a model for their children. Non-fiction should be included in reading instruction to enable young people and adults to use books as tools for learning, not only at school but also in every part of their life. Governments are requested to examine existing school systems and to try and find ways of integrating children suffering from particular learning problems into the mainstream rather than excluding them, so that they do not leave school prematurely.

3. Research

UNESCO and the governments of the UNESCO Europe Region are requested to initiate research into the causes and consequences of illiteracy among both young people and adults. Under the guidance of the UIE, an international comparative survey comprising not only quantitative data but also in-depth analysis should be developed. Research findings already existing as well as future ones should be made available on international level. The research should take into account the personal experiences of learners as well as their individual life situation.

4. Development and Funding

Governments are responsible for educational policy and should thus provide adequate funding for basic education and literacy programmes. Furthermore, a sufficient long-term funding should be guaranteed to literacy programmes since reading and writing cannot be taught to adults in short-term courses. It is also necessary to finance innovative pilot projects, including provision for project evaluation and monitoring to secure the results for other projects.

5. Structure and Organization

Governments and non-governmental organizations should promote co-operation between the formal school systems and literacy institutions. The responsibility for basic education, however, lies still with schools and should not be transferred to adult education institutions. Furthermore, the educational autonomy of literacy programmes and their specific charcteristics should be preserved. Programmes not specifically designed for functionally illiterates, yet dealing with areas such as vocational training, integration of youth and up-grading the skills of the unemployed should take into account the needs and situations of people with the lowest educational levels.

6. Implementation

The governments of industrialized countries are advised to develop approaches to the acquisition of reading and writing after leaving school. Those young people and adults should be addressed who are least motivated and educated, as well as most alienated from formalized education. UNESCO is requested to give advisory support to governments to develop curricula which take full account of abilities, skills, and experiences of different age groups. Oral culture of the learner should be viewed as a valuable source for the production of written literacy material. Learners should be treated as active partners within the learning process. In order to prevent relapse into functional illiteracy after leaving school, teaching methods and their effects should be thoroughly examined. Class evaluation should be designed and tested to assess the learner's difficulties and progress. This is important for both teachers and learners so that the former can always check and improve his or her teaching methods. Governments are asked to promote teacher training programmes which pay special attention to the reading and writing difficulties of young people and adults. These programmes should also provide ways of identifying

learning problems at an early stage. Thus, the teacher should be enabled to understand the development of each child and to co-operate with its parents. This should also be a subject of further education of teachers.

7. Public Information

UNESCO, governments and non-governmental organizations are requested to create public awareness for the problems of functionally illiterates in order to produce public support necessary for surmounting these problems.

8. International Co-operation

UNESCO's financial means are limited and its literacy and basic education programmes are mainly serving developing countries. Nevertheless, UNESCO with its world-wide mandate has also an important role to play in industrialized countries. Their cooperation is the starting point to improve literacy measures. It can in particular be initiated by the National Commissions for UNESCO. It is recommended that they deal with:

- ways of developing new teaching materials and methods in order to motivate children, young people and adults to learn reading and writing;
- ways of developing comprehensive curricula taking into account both aspects of the world of work as well as vocational training;
- ways of improving periodical publications and books as well as other documents and forms designed by and for new literates.

On occasion of this workshop, the UNESCO Institute for Education was asked to create and promote a network of international co-operation in the struggle against illiteracy. This network can

facilitate exchanges of information and related documentation, bibliographies etc.

Perspectives: International Literacy Year and beyond

UNESCO is the lead agency for planning activities in the framework of the United Nations International Literacy Year 1990. To this end UNESCO should prepare a world report on the state of illiteracy and the programmes and measures combating it.

For the first time, not only the developing countries but also the industrialized countries are invited to contribute in presenting their experiences. International Literacy Year should also be used as an occasion for enhancing co-operation and solidarity between the industrialized and the developing countries. The UNESCO Secretariat and the National Commissions for UNESCO are urged to find means to permit large numbers of people to participate in such programmes of solidarity (such as student exchange programmes between developed and developing countries). Moreover, UNESCO should evaluate, in co-operation with the governments and non-governmental organizations, the progress made in implementing the recommendations of the Workshop.

The following material is available at the UNESCO Institute for Education (UIE),
Feldbrunnenstr. 58, D-2000 Hamburg 13:

(1) Final Report and Recommendation of the UNESCO-Workshop: "Prevention of illiteracy and integration of youth into the world of work"; workshop of European specialists for education held at the UNESCO Institute for Education in Hamburg from the 1 to 5 December, 1986 (available in German, English and French).

(2) Giere, U.: Functional Illiteracy in Industrialized Countries. An international bibliography. Hamburg, 1987.

(3) A publication series on case studies in different countries: United Kingdom, Federal Republic of Germany, Netherlands, Belgium.

In the specialized UIE library there are teaching and learning materials from over 100 countries filed and on shelves. Access is open to researchers and educational planners from all over the world.

An Experts' Talk on Literacy

at UNESCO Workshop on Functional Illiteracy, UNESCO Institute for Education, Hamburg, 1-5 December 1986, moderated by Bernhard Gläss. Participants: Arthur Gillette, Programme Specialist of UNESCO, Paris; Jack Pearpoint, President of the Frontier College, Toronto; György Szèpe, Head of the Department of General and Applied Linguistics, Janusz Pannonius University, Pécs, Hungary

Arthur Gillette: The main recommendation of the experts' meeting in Hamburg was to tell the governments that if they go on restricting in the field of basic education even for adults, they are giving away responsibility. It was very clear that illiteracy must be fought wherever it is found because literacy itself should be viewed as a basic human right. This recommendation shows the governments and the non-governmental organizations their major responsibility in the struggle against illiteracy. There are adults who went through the school system, finished compulsory schooling - be it eight, nine or ten years depending on the country - and for a variety of reasons never really used reading and writing in their daily life, their personal or professional life, and a number of years later when they were tested, they were found to have more or less forgotten how to read and write. It really seems that there are young people who do learn to read and write at least up to a minimum standard at school and then forget their skills again because they never use them.

Jack Pearpoint: These are the same kind of people we have been working with in Toronto and whom we have been referring to in our talks with the Canadian government for a long time. But certainly the climate has changed in the past decade, and it has changed in a number of ways. One of them is that unemployment has increased dramatically and secondly, technology has radically altered many, many fields of work which often leads to unemployment. Our experience is that those of us who are fairly well off have excellent access to more and more informa-

tion, using computers, telephones, using all kinds of new electronic media. However, those who are less privileged do not have that same access. It is frightening nowadays: jobs, in for instance the mining industry, a few decades ago they used picks and shovels, but now there are extremely expensive very large high-tech machines. And even in a pizza place the orders go back to the kitchen on a computer print-out. The computer age has introduced data processing all over, and there is no longer any place to go to either in North America nor in Europe where you can escape from the reality of having to deal with print.

Arthur Gillette: The importance of basic knowledge in reading and writing as well as in handling electronic media reveals itself as a prerequisite for re-training programmes. There are in-service programmes in a sufficient number, but some people are excluded from in-service or re-training because they do not have the formal education or the certificates needed.

Jack Pearpoint: This is a delicate problem. The subject in-service and re-training on a low level has barely been discussed up to now. But we will have to, although national and international discussions are only just beginning.

György Szèpe: Eastern European countries differ only slightly from the West. There are some differences which I would like to point out, however. Most countries have had compulsory education for a hundred years and the level of cultural techniques is continuously rising. In the last thirty or forty years, after the Second World War with its social changes and now that schools have become institutions of the state, free of charge but compulsory, the level of literacy and the demands for handling printed material has risen. So we thought that we have practically no illiterate people in Hungary. We have about one to two per cent of illiterates and this is just about the same as in any industrialized country in Central or Western Europe. Surprisingly enough we discovered though, that there are very few people who ever pick up a book. Some young researchers organized a survey of

reading and writing habits in Hungary and it turned out that the situation is not so good. We have many so-called functionally illiterates who might have some knowledge of reading and writing and drawing and calculating, but they hardly ever use it, perhaps because they are never compelled to do so in their work.

If you want to identify some of the groups of these people, then I have to point out the gypsies, the Sinti and Roma people. Nobody knows exactly how many there are and it is also very difficult to find that out because two thirds of the gypsies no longer speak their native language; they speak Hungarian but they still have their own value system, the Sinti or Roma system, which hold the family in very high esteem. But in their culture there is little regard for writing and reading. Those Sinti who do not speak Hungarian at the age of six may have difficulties. The problem is, if a Sinti or Roma child enters the first grade in school and he or she does not speak the language of the country, say Hungarian, then something must be done about it.

If we do not perceive the problem then he or she will drop out. And you know even in a socialist system, as in Hungary, illiteracy can reproduce itself if you do not pay special attention to people who are in dire need of being taught how to read and write. These are national minorities who - like the Sinti or Roma - are not quite integrated but on their way to be integrated into society. And people who are coming from other countries as migrant workers and whose children cannot receive an education. I think, that generally children should be taught in their native language - and this is a task for the state because education is part of the human rights.

Figure 3: The State Library in Hamburg in 1945

A Short History of Literacy Education since 1946

Since 1946, since the foundation of the UNESCO more than 40 years ago, there are world-wide efforts to abolish illiteracy - in old as in new democracies and even in "terror-régimes".

From the beginning of the century until the sixties, literacy instruction for the population at large was considered an important (economic) factor for development in all countries. Nowadays, this view of literacy instruction is criticized as "technocratic optimism of education economists" (cf. e.g. Berstecher, D., Carr-Hill, R.: Primary Education and Economic Recession in the Developing World since 1980. Paris: UNESCO 1990).

From the very beginning, literacy has been connected with the term "functional". "Functional" sounds like aiming at something, being active and effective. In many cases, however, it seems not to be clear who is the actor and which is the frame of reference: is it the individual facing the society? It is not known when the connection between "literacy" and "functional" was made for the first time. Around the end of the Second World War, the definition of not being illiterate meant that somebody was able to write his or her own name and to understand a simple message. During this war, the US Army defined illiterates as "persons unable to understand basic written instructions necessary for basic military functions and tasks." (cf. Harmann, D.: Illiteracy. An overview, Harvard Educational Review 40. 1970, p.227)

The above definition from the United States of America influenced all further considerations and programmes on literacy education instruction - especially those of UNESCO. UNESCO placed literacy into the context of basic education aimed at helping people to live and act in their own cultural environment (UNESCO: Fundamental Education: A Description and Programme. Monographs on Fundamental Education. No.1, Paris, 1949, p.16). The ability to think, to speak and to listen as well as

the skills of reading, writing and numeracy were grouped into basic education. Basic education - according to UNESCO, especially in the early publications - should facilitate the creation and preservation of human and civil values for a creative life. This classical position which includes a strong belief in progress obviously came up under the influence of the new intellectual beginning after the Second World War. It also inspired Sir Julian Huxley, Founding Secretary of UNESCO, to demand that the culture of classical literature should be extended to the developing countries. This was a point of view which, as a form of "cultural vandalism", neither became part of UNESCO's long-term programmes nor was it believed appropriate for literacy practice in several countries. Each government is responsible for its educational programmes, though advised by the education experts of UNESCO.

In the fifties, the main problem of literacy education was the tutors' training and the providing of teaching material. As there was no teaching material suitable for adults and, moreover, as the teaching staff was not prepared for the new job, the formalized and standardized methods of formal schooling were applied to adults. Thus the early literacy programmes were suffering from the lack of a preceding phase of tutors' training and of the production of suitable teaching material. Consequently, hardly any programme could be successfully completed. After this obvious failure of the first world-wide literacy "offensive" of UNESCO, the General Conference decided in 1961 that an evaluation of the programmes and a general stock-taking should precede further activities.

The direct result of the General Conference in 1961 was a major two billion dollar attack against illiteracy. This money was to be used to teach 330 million people how to read and write within ten years - this number corresponded to half of the estimated figure of illiterates worldwide. There is no need for further explanation in order to understand that this "project of the century" was very unlikely to succeed: In addition to the aspects

mentioned above, a discussion of the overall goal and a plan appropriate to the situation was missing. In countries without sufficient infrastructure (e.g. roads, schools, communication systems), without any reading or information culture such as newspapers, an isolated literacy instruction was bound to fail. In 1964, after only three years, the programme was called off (cf. Blaug, M.: Literacy and economic development. The School Review. 1966, pp. 393 ff). In the following years, however, several of the objectives set by the General Conference in 1961 could be implemented: stock-taking of illiteracy, an analysis of the previous programmes and an additional evaluation of the specific goals of the countries and population groups. In a UNESCO publication (An Asian Model of Educational Development: Perspective 1965-80. Paris, 1966, pp. 97 ff) the elements of future (functional) literacy training were defined:

1. Literacy programmes should be co-ordinated with the plans for economic and social development.
2. The work should start with those who need literacy skills and are motivated to learn.
3. The programmes should be connected with economic objectives and should be realized first of all in areas looking forward to fast economic development.
4. Literacy does not just mean reading and writing but also includes technical knowledge.
5. Literacy should help to enhance the productivity of work and the social-occupational mobility of a person.

These goals indicate the direction towards a new development which no longer places the individual in the centre as it was done in the beginning, but which was more supportive in preparing people for their social and occupational roles (cf. UNESCO: The Experimental World Literacy Programme: A Critical Assessment. Paris, 1976. pp. 10 f.) This new attempt at literacy instruction was adopted in 1965 at the World Conference on

Literacy in Teheran. By the end of the sixties, eleven pilot projects were tested. The programmes were integrated into training courses for general technical skills, weaving, repair of cars and machinery or agricultural training. Yet, no subject referred to public life or to functions written language has beyond the technical aspects. The evaluation of these projects in 1976 was less disappointing compared to previous experience. The small number of adults involved was mainly criticized together with the high drop-out-rate and the high relapse ratio of 15% to 60% (p.174ff). A precise assessment of the projects revealed: "The more the contents of the courses took the environment into account, the more effective the programme was in achieving functional literacy." (p.160). There was an additional aspect identified: success could also be recorded when neo-literates were able to go to local or mobile libraries and when information media, museums and cultural associations were at their disposal. (p.192)

The main problems of literacy instruction before the 1980ies can be summarized as follows:

1. Short-term literacy campaigns covered a vast area but suffered from a lack of qualified tutors and of teaching material for adults.
2. The self-motivation of the neo-literates was overestimated.
3. The difficulties after the initial phase of literacy instruction were underestimated, with relapse into illiteracy as an often-observed consequence.
4. Reading, writing and numeracy were merely taught as a goal in itself - possible applications, for example to ease the daily work, were not enough taken into account.

From this background, UNESCO's Third Medium Term Plan (1990 - 1995) and the documents of the World Conference on

"Education for All" (Jomtien/Thailand, March 1990) draw the nescessary conclusions: basic education for all, integration of literacy instruction in the learning of practical skills, and post-literacy instruction (e.g. the creation of a literate environment) are the elements of a strategy to overcome illiteracy world-wide.

The Federal Republic of Germany Preparing for International Literacy Year 1990

(Statement of *Dr. Traugott Schöfthaler*, German Commission for UNESCO, for the Delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany at the 24th Session of UNESCO's General Conference, Special Plenary Meeting on Literacy, 3 November 1987 in Paris)

Literacy as a priority field of action within UNESCO's educational programmes

Our delegation considers the 23rd General Conference in Sofia a milestone in the history of our organization because it marks the beginning of UNESCO's reform process. The present General Conference can be considered another milestone because of the widely accepted willingness of Member States to concentrate on importent areas of the organization's activities. Our delegation appreciates the climate of mutual understanding in pursuance of the important task of programme concentration along the lines of priorities set by Member States.

Within this context, Recommendation No. 29 on the 1988/89 Programme and Budget made by the Executive Board during its 126th session, is of particular importance (24 C/6, para. 29): It is recommended that the General Conference effect a further significant increase in the resources for the organization's activities aiming at the intensification of the struggle against illiteracy.

We have noted with great interest that in the work of Commission II this task has been given particular attention. In this context, document 24 C/67 (the report of the Director-General on the Draft Programme for International Literacy Year and the results of the work carried out for its preparation) is playing a catalytic role. Our delegation appreciates the new and innovative tendencies as they are reflected in this document: in particu-

lar, the identification of issues of critical importance to the progress of literacy are considered a major step towards further stengthening the efficiency of the organization's activities in this field. The document cites as one major aim of the International Literacy Year "to launch a plan of action for the eradication of illiteracy by the year 2000 and for addressing issues of critical importance to the progress of literacy such as
- reducing primary-school drop-out and
- establishing post-literacy programmes to prevent relapse into illiteracy." (Document 24 C/67, para. 44)

In the spirit of these encouraging developments our delegation has proposed to "reflect on the interrelation between literacy and adult education, vocational training and international education." (From the speech of Ambassador Barthold Witte in Commission I on 24 October.)

Our delegation is convinced that these tendencies of innovation fully comply with the organization's mandate as stated in Article I, para. 2(b) of UNESCO's Constitution, that "to realize (its) purpose the Organization will ... give fresh impulse to popular education and to the spread of culture."

Some of the delegates may share the feeling of a journalist of the Brazilean daily newspaper "O Globo": Towards the end of UNESCO's "Europe Region Workshop of specialists on prevention of functional illiteracy and integration of youth into the world of work", held from 1 to 5 of December 1986 at the UNESCO Institute for Education in Hamburg, the journalist phoned from Rio de Janeiro and asked: Did I really understand correctly that you in industrialized countries are dealing with the problem of illiteracy?

I can assure you that many journalists in our country felt puzzled in a similar way when confronted with the results of this meeting, which was the first of its kind in UNESCO's Europe region. Having coped with this initial phase of irritation,

however, the media in our country reacted in a very positive manner: They became more and more interested, and they contributed effectively to our task of alerting public opinion on problems of illiteracy, in industrialized as well as in developing countries. The German Commission for UNESCO has compiled a press book on the Hamburg Workshop. Nearly all of the press-cuttings or audio-visual reports on this Workshop indicate that this important activity of UNESCO has remarkably contributed to improving UNESCO's prestige in our country. First reactions of a Working Group of the European Communities on so-called "second-order illiteracy" are also very encouraging.

The struggle against illiteracy has become an area of common concern among industrialized as well as developing countries, thus underlining the importance of objectives no. III and IV of para. 44 of document 24 C/67:
- "increasing popular participation, within and among countries, in efforts to combat illiteracy" and
- "increasing co-operation and solidarity among Member States in the struggle against illiteracy."

There are, of course, marked differences between industrialized and developing countries,
- the former having provided general education for more than half a century to 100 per cent of their population,
- and the latter, in many cases, still striving for universal primary education.

As a result, the number of those having never been trained in the cultural techniques of reading, writing and numeracy is too small for being a matter of educational statistics in most industrialized countries.

There are, however, tendencies of relapse into what UNESCO has called "functional illiteracy" in the Federal Republic of Germany as well as in many other industrialized countries. These tendencies have been brought to the attention of our

governments only some years ago, and with major involvement of UNESCO.

The danger of relapse into illiteracy should be taken very seriously. In our point of view, this issue could constitute a focal point of reflection for the world community, thus enhancing increasing co-operation and solidarity among Member States in the struggle against illiteracy.

1980-1990: A Decade of growing awareness of illiteracy in industrialized countries and increasing international co-operation in the field of literacy

Until the end of the 1970s, the problem of adult illiteracy did not exist in the public opinion of most industrialized countries, including our own. The situation changed rapidly after the Federal Ministry of Education and Science, alarmed by adult educators, committed in 1979 the first scientific study on illiteracy in the Federal Republic of Germany. The findings were that there exists a significant but unknown number of fully schooled adults in our country who have virtually lost their ability of reading and writing because they did not make use of what they had learned in school. As a consequence, they are seriously hampered in their active participation in social and cultural life as well as in their mobility in the field of work. Action was taken immediately: the governmental authorities, on federal as well as on Länder and on municipal levels, encouraged the existing adult education centres or "Folk High Schools" (Volkshochschulen) to offer, on an experimental level, courses in reading and writing. Today, such courses are offered by over 300 such centres with about 8,000 adults enrolled.

This development had a catalytic role for German organizations and agencies involved in development co-operation: Literacy had been considered, until the 1970s, a particular aspect of qualification which would remain, once trained successfully.

The danger of relapse into illiteracy of neo-literates in developing countries, however, was brought to the attention of these agencies at the same time as we became aware that this fate could be the fate of our own children as well. As a consequence, literacy was more and more considered an element that is inbuilt to the whole process of lifelong learning, as a key qualification which must be used and further developed in the course of all other learning, in school and out of school, at home and at work. Today, development co-operation is seen by authorities of our country as based on both literacy and post-literacy, within the framework of continuing and lifelong education.

It was also in 1980 when our government started subsidizing an inter-regional project of UNESCO's Institute for Education (UIE), Hamburg on research and orientation into the field of post-literacy. Within this project, research and orientation seminars were held in all of UNESCO's regions, involving key personnel in the field of literacy of more than 80 countries. In 1987, a new phase of this project has started in order to contribute as efficiently as possible to the struggle against illiteracy. UIE gathered from 9 to 21 November 1987 key personnel from 24 countries of all of UNESCO's regions, each represented by a decision maker and a senior specialist in the field of literacy. The participants were expected to bring a diagnosis of literacy issues of their respective countries to Hamburg and to develop, during the seminar, national plans of action.

Within this context, our delegation appreciates that UNESCO will include UIE's activities into the plan of action of eradication of illiteracy by the year 2000 to be launched during International Literacy Year. We appreciate also that the Director-General will arrange for greater involvement of UIE into the execution of UNESCO's programmes, and for strengthening co-operation between UNESCO Headquarters' and UIE's staff. The regional and situation-specific approach of UIE seems to fit very well into the development of UNESCO's literacy work in general, with launching regional projects first in Latin America and the

Caribbean, then in Africa and Asia and the Pacific, and from now on also in the Arab countries.

We were carefully listening to the comments made by many other delegations in Commission II of this General Conference on the nature of UNESCO's plan of eradication of illiteracy by the year 2000: some delegations called this a dream that will never come true; most delegations, however, felt that a new take-off is absolutely essential, and that the dream should lead to at least significant progress by the year 2000. Pursuing a dream does not by necessity prevent us from realistic policies. As the delegation of India pointed out, in Commission II, eradication of illiteracy in India will be possible by the year 2080. But even this objective will be unrealistic unless significant progress will be achieved by the year 2000.

Let me conclude by presenting several ideas of what the Federal Republic of Germany could contribute to international co-operation in this field.

Research and development in the field of literacy in the Federal Republic of Germany

Methods and materials

The issue of UNESCO's quarterly review of education "Prospects No. 62" has an open file on "Illiteracy in industrialized countries: situation and action." This file includes an essay by Wolfgang Kreft on "Methods and material in teaching adult literacy in the Federal Republic of Germany." Mr. Kreft is one of the pedagogical specialists in this area, with experience as field worker in adult literacy since the early 1980s. He is staff member of the Pedagogical Institute of the German Adult Education Association, the association of more than 1000 adult education institutes which was awarded the 1985 UNESCO Iraq Literacy

Prize for its efforts in international co-operation in the field of literacy.

With growing experience in adult literacy work in our country, international co-operation of the German Adult Education Association is also increasing. The experimental stage of the early 1980s is over: now there is a series of guidebooks, diagnostic instruments and teaching-learning materials available, including blueprints for locally produced teaching aids. Among the salient issues, there is the guideline that methods and materials should be as specific as possible. Adult literacy material, according to Mr. Kreft, is considered a stimulating and inspiring element "whether it meets students' attitudes and difficulties or reveals its practical uses in everyday life". In particular, such countries where adult illiteracy has become rather marginal are invited to seek co-operation with the German Adult Education Association in the field of methods and materials.

With great interest we have noted that in some countries of Latin America there is a situation with which we feel familiar: people with difficulties in reading and writing try to hide their problems. They never would go to literacy classes but are delighted to have an opportunity of re-learning reading and writing in "people's colleges" or other adult education institutes.

Libraries

Libraries, in the Federal Republic, are increasingly aware of their essential role in post-literacy work. Traditionally, they had evaluated their success by counting growing numbers of loans and people coming to the library. Only very recently, the problem of adult literacy was discovered as being a major issue for our libraries: many of them now try to attract people who have never gone to a library, and offer them social events, with an opportunity to get access to a wide range of easy-to-read or more difficult books. As a result of the 1986 UNESCO Work-

shop on illiteracy in industrialized countries, the Federal Institute for Libraries has started international action and national cooperation on preventing relapse into illiteracy of young school leavers and adults.

Media

The news media had often been accused of causing relapse into illiteracy among youth and adults. Some experts went so far as to label television "the new opium of the people". Our recent experience, however, is quite contrary to this conviction that might reveal itself as being a mere prejudice. The efforts of attracting people to adult literacy classes offered by adult education institutes, for example, were made possible to a large extent by promoting these courses via the media. As a consequence, the specialized media institute of our Adult Education Association has started a campaign for promoting reading and writing through the media. In co-operation with the German Commission for UNESCO, this Adolf-Grimme Institute plans for 1988 an international conference on the use of media in adult literacy. This promotion aspect, however, is only the first step towards a reconciliation of books and the other media. The Ministers of Education and Culture of the Länder in the Federal Republic have encouraged their educational planning institutes to develop concepts of "education of users of the media" on school level. The idea behind is that media can contribute to more reading and writing proficiency the more the users of the media have learned to make proper use of them. In this context, the issue of understanding and of creativity are the common concern of those dealing with media, be they printed or audiovisual.

Literacy strategies for non-governmental organizations

With a view at the preparation of International Literacy Year, the German Foundation for International Development (DSE) has joined other organizations in developing literacy strategies for nongovernmental organizations all over the world. National, regional and inter-regional or world conferences and workshops from 1987 to 1990 will bring together non-governmental specialists, as foreseen under objective (iii) of International Literacy Year. The guiding principles are ways and means of assisting governments in their struggle against illiteracy, increased popular participation in the social and cultural life of their communities, and further development of literacy within the framework of continuing education and lifelong learning.

Development co-operation

The German Agency for Development Co-operation (GTZ) has, in the 1980s, linked most of the projects in the fields of agricultural extension, health, technology and environment very closely to the concept of basic or general education for all. In close co-operation with the World Bank and regional development banks or funds, the effects of literacy and basic education on productivity and participation in public life were studied - with the following result: in many cases, resources invested in education are wasted unless further training, particularly in the use of reading writing and numeracy, is provided. Within the framework of combined general education, social and economic development, including appropriate infrastructure, the results of development co-operation were most promising.

Certainly it is not appropriate to paint an optimistic picture of the situation of literacy in the world community. With still increasing absolute numbers of illiterates, and the nightmare of a second-order illiteracy of those relapsed into it, both action and reflection are needed. Several delegations have expressed their

views, during this General Conference, that whatever we do in our struggle against illiteracy, it will not be sufficient. The message I wanted to communicate to you was that, in such a desperate situation, growing awareness of problems at home must not prevent you from being motivated for international co-operation and solidarity. In the field of literacy, I am convinced, rather the contrary is true.

Towards Basic Education for All

(Statement of *Dr. Kurt Müller*, Member of UNESCO's Executive Board, for the Delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany at the 25th Session of UNESCO's General Conference, Commission II, 19 October 1989 in Paris)

(1) Problems of illiteracy have a universal character

It is with deep satisfaction and unconditional approval that my delegation notes the significant progress which marks documents "Towards basic education for all" (25 C/4; 25 C/5 Progr. I.1) and "The Unesco Plan of Action for Literacy, 1990-2000" (25 C/71, Draft Res. para 47, operative item 3):

(a) All documents before us state very clearly the outstanding *priority* of basic education for all and literacy among UNESCO's activities in the field of education within and beyond the third Medium Term Plan. We unreservedly agree with this position and are prepared to contribute to its relization as best we can.

(b) Going beyond the mere statement of necessity of "struggle against illiteracy", these documents formulate *positive goals* for literacy and basic education for all and thus reflect most truly the mandate of UNESCO as stipulated in Art. I, para 1 of its Constitution: "to give fresh impulse to popular education".

(c) UNESCO's action for literacy needs to be based on new forms of *solidarity between all regions*. UNESCO can help to elaborate solutions, but not implement or finance them beyond first assistance during a pilot period. That is meant with the catalyst role of the Organization. However it only works with the active and responsible involvement of all countries concerned.

(d) There is of course no doubt that problems of developing countries need top priority in international cooperation in the field of literacy, too. The working documents of the forthcoming *"World Conference on Education for All"* next March in Thailand

therefore clearly focus on ways to improve conditions for access to basic education in developing countries with the participation of authorities and private institutions in these countries. My Government attaches great importance to the goals of the World Conference. We welcome the presentation by the Secretariat of UNESCO of a paper on the progress in the preparations of the Conference, as detailed information from the Inter-Agency-Commission has been scarce until now. I do hope that this General Conference will among other results bring about progress in this context including an even clearer and unanimously accepted definition of the scope and content of the World Conference.

(e) However, I should like to stress that *problems of illiteracy have a universal character*. Therefore, I appreciate that all documents presented here for discussion truly reflect all aspects of literacy, functional literacy and post-literacy. These can to our mind be viewed as an indivisible whole; illiteracy is not limited to developing countries, and functional literacy is a goal not only for industrialized countries, but for the world community.

(f) We owe particular attention and appreciation to UNESCO's increased efforts towards strenthening *interagency cooperation within the UN system* in the field of basic education and literacy. These are in our view a decisive element in the process of reform. It must, however, be admitted that interagency cooperation requires flanking measures of coordination *in* the Member States, in the form of appropriate coordination between their own competent authorities and institutions. Some Member States, including my own country, still seem to have difficulties in this respect.

(2) Major Issues

With your permission I should like to elaborate on the four major issues which characterize the progress in UNESCO's concept of literacy and basic education, namely

- priorities
- positive and impulse-giving objectives
- solidarity between industrialized and developing countries
- inter-agency cooperation.

(3) Priorities

Already in the programme and budget of the current biennium financial resources for literacy had been increased as far as possible in the given budgetary frame; the new Draft Programme and Budget for 1990/91 continues in this direction. With view to the International Literacy Year 1990 this draft formulates intersectoral references between the problem of access to knowledge and all other programme areas of UNESCO. In particular, Work Plans of all three specialized UNESCO Institutes in the field of education include now issues of literacy and basic education:

- The *UNESCO Institute for Education in Hamburg (UIE)* with the support of the Federal Government and hopefully many other Member States, will continue to do research and orientation in the field of post-literacy and continuing education for developing countries. In addition, UIE will strive to collect and make available to interested Member States experiences of developing and industrialized countries in the field of functional literacy and lifelong education.

- The *International Bureau of Education (IBE)* now concentrates on the 42th International Conference of Education (ICE) which will focus on literacy and on the relevant documentation of research findings and experience. We expect that the 42th ICE will lead to concrete agreements between Ministers of Education which take into account the respective results of regional Conferences of Ministers of Education, especially MINEDEUROPE IV, 1988, Recommendation No. 8 on "Interregional cooperation":

"Recommends to the Member States:

1. that they endeavour to draw from the achievements of this fourth conference whatever may be useful to cooperation in the field of education with the other regions of the world, particularly within the framework of UNESCO and its organs and within the framework of relations among National Commissions;

2. that they give priority, in this connection, to those major themes of this fourth conference that concern all regions, such as the promotion of education for all; combating illiteracy and functional illiteracy; education and the environment; the impact of the new information technologies in education; (and)

multilateral research concerning methods in school and out-of-school education with the aim of developing mutual understanding and tolerance, combating prejudice and the stereotypes that still exist, encouraging respect for others and facilitating communication between human beings;

Recommends to the Director-General that he ensure the Organization's full support for these efforts in the resolutions adopted by the General Conference."

- The German Foundation of International Development has offered a long term collaboration with the *International Institute for Educational Planning* (IIEP) in the field of training of literacy education planners and trainers.

(4) Positive and impulse-giving-objectives

We welcome the various efforts of UNESCO to formulate positive and impulse-giving objectives of the "struggle against illiteracy" with view to the year 2000. I should like to refer in this context to the Director-General who in 25 C/4, para. 534, makes it very clear: *"people, whether young or old, are not 'made' literate: they make themselves literate when the economic and social conditions in which they live represent a source of motivation and incentive to do*

so. This means, among other things, that literacy activities must be supported by post-literacy work and the availability of easy-to-read materials on subjects of relevance and interest to the newly literate child or adult and, at a later stage, of newspapers, magazines, books and other materials which can be read with pleasure and benefit."

The Executive Board recommends to formulate the first phrase more modestly and to underline the importance of efforts of educators and teachers. There are certainly good reasons for this suggestion. However, it remains to be stressed that literacy does not merely regard the individual person; it is vital to create a literate environment which provides incentives to individuals and gives them the chance to develop and use their capabilities throughout their lives. As has been stated as early as by the 4th International Conference on Adult Education (Paris 1985) in its recommendation No. VI: the point is not just access to knowledge but *participation:*

"Recommends to the Member States:

to adopt the concept of literacy to the purpose of particular actions, and accordingly to distinguish between:

(a) functional literacy, which, in addition to inculcating learning skills, should help workers to achieve greater mastery of their occupations, increase their theoretical and practical knowledge, advance in their careers and continue with their education;

(b) social literacy, which should be a means to the acquisition of the tools of further mastery of the written word and pave the way for the integration of the newly literate into their cultural, social and political environments;

Recommends to the Director-General:

in his efforts to concentrate the activities of the Organization, to give special attention to adult education and, in particular, to programmes aimed at the eradication of illiteracy and functional illiteracy, taking particularly into account the specific educational needs of adult illiterates;

to give support when necessary to the efforts of national governments to engage in the creation of universal adult literacy programmes designed to equip adult learners with skills necessary to participate meaningfully in the conception of economic, social, political and cultural development in national life;"

We hope that this new perspective will motivate even more experts, institutions and organizations of all Member States to cooperate for the ambitious goals of the "UNESCO Plan of Action for Literacy, 1990-2000" (Doc. 25 C/71). We therefore endorse the Draft Resolution contained in para 47 of this document.

(5) Solidarity between all regions

In the light of what I said earlier I should like to suggest that the somewhat schematic division in this plan between "illiteracy" as a problem of developing countries and "functional illiteracy" as one of industrialized countries be revised. This would underline the worldwide relevance of functional literacy and the need for a political will not only to overcome illiteracy but at the same time prevent functional illiteracy. The universal goal is the creation of a literate environment providing motivation, incentives and opportunities for participation. This goal unites North and South, West and East.

MINEDEUROPE IV with its recommendation No. 11 ("Overcoming illiteracy in the Europe Regions and the World") has in our opinion improved the preconditions for increased solidarity between industrialized and developing countries.

The Federal Republic of Germany is interested in joining the activities stipulated by this recommendation, especially with respect to the exchange of experiences and fresh ideas in all fields of promotion of access to knowledge and learning for all. UNESCO as a World Forum is most suited for this kind of exchange.

(6) Inter-agency co-operation

Literacy and basic education for all is such a great challenge for the world community that it requires not only co-operation between UNESCO and the Member States as well as with NGOs but also close inter-agency co-operation within the UN system. We note with great satisfaction that in this respect much has been achieved during the last two years: between UNESCO and UNEP first proposals on a programme "environmental literacy" have been developed. UNESCO, UNICEF, and WHO plan a joint project "The young chield and the family environment"; the biggest venture is certainly the 1990 World Conference on Education for All, which is being prepared jointly by the World Bank, UNICEF, UNDP and UNESCO. This type of co-operation is the way to make optimal use of competence and experience of the respective UN Institutions. It is particularly important with view to the limited resources of UNESCO which on its own can only make a small contribution to solving problems of world-wide scope.

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Abbreviations

AGI	Adolf Grimme Institute of the DVV
AOB	Team for Orientation and Education Aid
ATD	Aide à toute Detresse, 'Aid in all emergencies'. ATD is an international non-governmental organization which strives for human rights for the poor, neglected and isolated. ATD has consultative status with UNESCO and the United Nations.
BMBW	Federal Minister (-ry) of Education and Science
DUK	German Commission for UNESCO, Bonn
DSE	German Foundation for International Development
DVV	German Adult Education Association
GTZ	German Agency for Technical Co-operation
PAS	Pedagogical Institute of the DVV
UIE	UNESCO Institute for Education

Addresses

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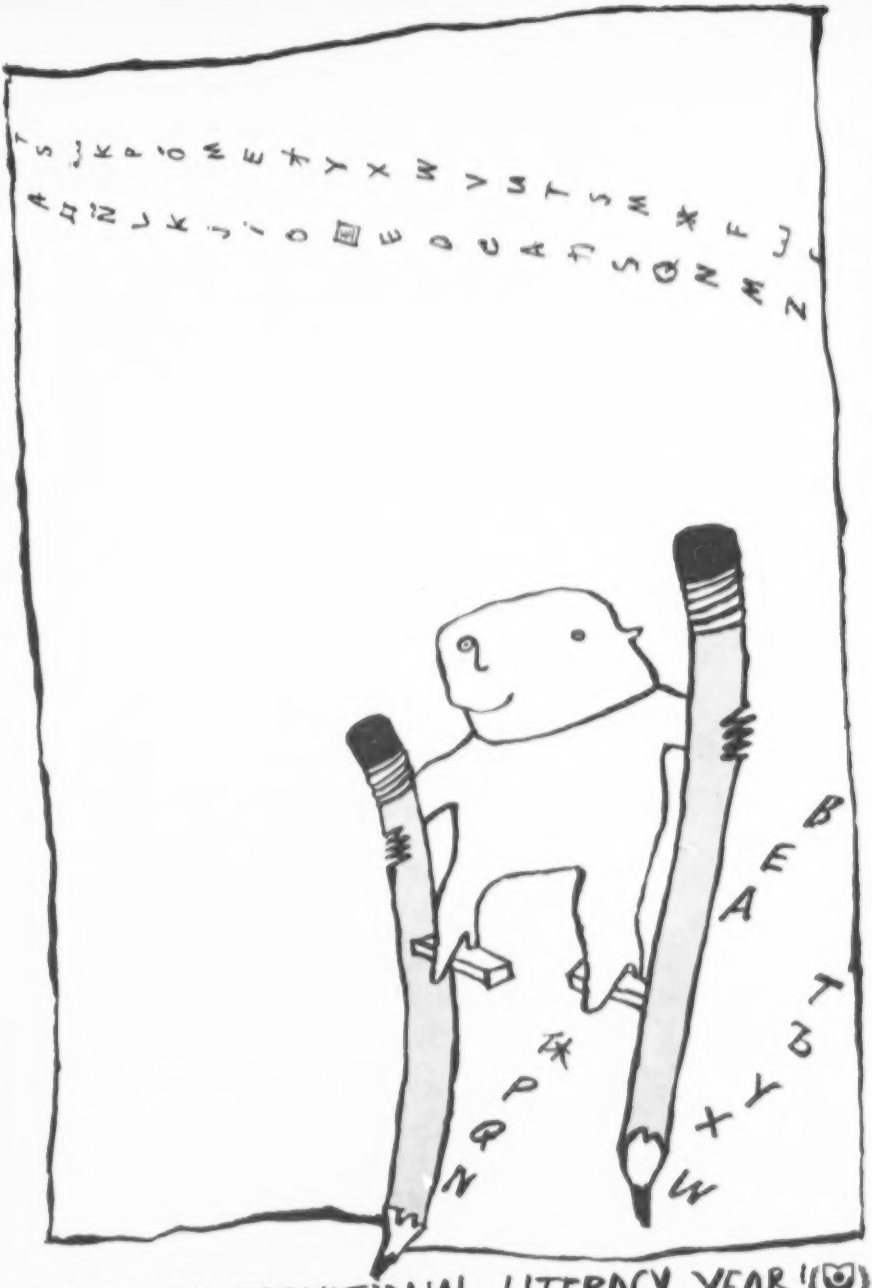

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